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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000113

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [ASEC](#) [PREF](#) [ELAB](#) [PL](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND - PRIME MINISTER TO FUND TIP VICTIMS SHELTER

REF: WARSAW 024

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Classified By: DCM - Quanrud for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (SBU) Summary. Following front-page media coverage about the potential closure of Poland's only shelter providing specialized assistance for victims of trafficking in Poland (reftel), Prime Minister Tusk offered public assurances January 13 that the GoP would provide the funds necessary to keep the shelter open. The PM has transferred 700,000 zloty (approximately USD 215,000) from the national budget reserve to the Interior Ministry to hold a tender for running the TIP shelter. According to the NGO LaStrada, the project should be open for bids in February or March. Although this solves the problem in the short-term, the GoP must take the next step of establishing a long-term, expanded funding mechanism for victim assistance. End Summary.

Media Storm

12. (C) NGO LaStrada's January 7 announcement that funding cuts might prompt the closure of Poland's only specialized shelter for TIP victims (reftel) generated an intense (print and broadcast) media storm that put pressure on the GoP to respond. On January 14, the news daily "Dziennik" carried a two-page story on the case of a Ugandan woman who had escaped from her traffickers in Warsaw's central train station days before. In a radio interview the same day, Slawomir Nowak, Head of the Prime Minister's Chancellery told journalists, "We will help LaStrada," and emphasized that PM Tusk was personally engaged in the matter. True to form, the PM's Chancellery turned what might have been a PR nightmare into a victory.

13. (C) On January 15, Piotr Mierecki, the Interior Ministry's coordinator for national activities to combat TIP, confidentially informed the Embassy that the PM will likely give 700,000 zloty (approximately USD 215,000) to the Interior Ministry to hold a tender for running the TIP shelter. Mierecki credited this positive development to the media attention surrounding the possible closing of LaStrada's shelter, the press coverage of the Ugandan woman who escaped from her traffickers, and the Ambassador's January 8 letter to Interior Minister Schetyna expressing our concern.

PM Chancellery Engaged

14. (C) On January 29, LaStrada president and founder, Stana

Buchowska, expressed appreciation for Embassy support and said LaStrada is now working with the PM's Chancellery on a long-term solution. Buchowska was called to meet with Igor Ostachowicz, Secretary of State in the PM's Chancellery, in the midst of the media storm. Ostachowicz said that the PM had approved using money from the state budget reserve to fund the shelter through a public tender administered by the Interior Ministry. When Ostachowicz proactively asked what else should be done, Buchowska told him that a proposed National Center for Consultation and Intervention for Trafficking Victims (noted in reftel) should be permanently established to secure its funding in the Interior Ministry's budget. She added that labor laws should be amended to allow the small number of trafficking victims in Poland to work and urged that a legal definition of trafficking be included in the Polish criminal code. Buchowska said she was amazed when three days later the proposed public tender was already at the PM Chancellery for approval; she expects it to be open for bids in February or March.

Comment

15. (C) In the wake of negative media attention, the GoP acted quickly to reverse what would have been a serious step backward for Polish efforts to combat TIP. The positive outcome was largely due to LaStrada's strategic use of the media, which succeeded in getting the PM's Chancellery engaged on TIP. We will continue to press the GoP to dedicate more resources to victim assistance programs, rather than relying on NGOs to solicit foreign grants for the vast majority of their operating expenses. In light of these developments, and the obvious long-term advantage of GoP funding, Post no longer considers it necessary to seek additional USG funds at this time.

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